

WASH POST 23 Apr 68

Approved For Release 2002/05/08 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000200020064-4

9

Committee Responsibility

Members of the Government Operations Committee will be at once craven and foolish if they submit to the tyranny of their aged chairman, Rep. William L. Dawson, in abolishing the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Government Information. Mr. Dawson, now in his eighties, has achieved his power through seniority. He used it last week, arbitrarily and capriciously, and without so much as consulting his colleagues, to do away with the Committee's most effective unit. The action ought to be challenged and reversed.

The Subcommittee, under Rep. John Moss's vigorous leadership, has been a constructive watchdog for Congress. It was responsible for formulating and bringing to enactment the Freedom of Information Act, and it has been vigilant in its insistence that the act be respected by Federal agencies. We thoroughly agree with the Subcommittee's ranking Republican, Rep. Ogden Reid, that the attempt to muzzle it "is a disservice to the Nation at a time when the Congress bears an especial responsibility to the American people to provide independent information and evaluation."

The Republican members of the Government Operations Committee will meet today to decide what they will do about Chairman Dawson's high-handedness. We hope they will rebel in a body. And we hope that enough Democrats will join them to make the rebellion effective. The matter is of real importance not alone for the sake of saving a most useful subcommittee but even more, perhaps, for the sake of asserting the principle of collective responsibility for a committee's conduct.

Approved For Release 2002/05/08 : CIA-RDP70B00338R000200020064-4